



St. Lucie County Legislative Update

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Our Mission....

To provide service, infrastructure and leadership necessary to advance a safe and sustainable community, maintain a high quality of life, and protect the natural environment for all our citizens.

GOVERNOR WANTS MORE THAN \$600 MILLION IN TAX CUTS



Gov. Rick Scott, brushing aside a more pessimistic outlook on the state's financial situation, wants state legislators to slash taxes by \$618 million in the coming year.

During stops in three Florida cities, Scott Wednesday touted a tax cut package he's asking the Republican-controlled Florida Legislature to pass this spring. It will be a key part of his spending recommendations that he will release in the next few weeks.

The biggest chunk of Scott's tax cut package includes a \$454 million proposal to cut by 25 percent the sales taxes charged on commercial rents. This is a tax cut that has gotten strong backing in the past for retailers and other business groups.

Scott is also proposing a 10-day back-to-school sales tax holiday, a three-day sales tax holiday for military veterans, a nine-day tax holiday on hurricane supplies, a one-day "camping and fishing" tax holiday that would remove sales taxes charged on fishing poles and other equipment. The governor will also propose a one-year elimination of sales taxes charged on college textbooks.

Senate President Joe Negron, R-Stuart, has already said he's willing to trim spending in order to free up money for some of his top priorities, including a substantial boost in money for Florida's state universities.

HOUSE MEMBER PROJECTS ALREADY OVER \$60 MILLION

As of Thursday, members of the Florida House have filed 43 appropriations projects bills so far, and the total has already exceeded \$66 million dollars.

According to House Rule 5.14, in order for a project to be included in the House budget, it must be filed as a standalone bill, favorably considered in committee, and made with non-recurring appropriations. So far, the largest appropriation project filed to date is the \$12.4 million requested in HB 2023 by Rep. Scott Plakon for Seminole State College Fine Arts Auditorium and Community Center.

St. Lucie County has submitted 3 projects to the Florida Legislature for funding, the County Culverts Replacement for \$900,000; North Hutchinson Island Septic to Sewer for \$3.8 million; and the Teague Hammock Preserve for \$400,000. All of our projects will be sponsored by Representative Larry Lee.

Click the links below



Watch Session Live:**Connect with
St. Lucie County!****Mark Satterlee**

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Rep. Randy Fine, R-Unincorporated South Brevard County, filed a bill this week that would require the inspection of septic tanks as part of home and other real estate sales.

Fine said the bill -- his first piece of introduced legislation -- would begin to address septic tank issues, without burdening taxpayers or people on fixed incomes who have no plans to sell their homes. A companion bill to his HB 285 is expected to be filed soon in the Florida Senate.

"Taxpayers will not be responsible for paying for the inspections, or any repairs that result, and those on fixed incomes, with no plans to sell their homes, will not be required to come up with funds for regular inspections," he said.

It appears to be a different approach compared to previous statements from the Senate and governor.

Sen. Joe Negron, R-Stuart, said in 2015 he would oppose measures to have "the government come to people's property and inspect their septic tanks and inform them they have a \$20,000 bill to replace a septic tank." But he did say state money could be provided to help deal with the septic issue.

And Gov. Rick Scott announced in July 2016 a proposed grant program to aid homeowners who voluntarily want to switch from septic tanks to central sewer systems. He also pledged to set aside money in 2017 to help communities around the Indian River Lagoon and Caloosahatchee River build new wastewater systems.

BRADLEY FILES IMPLEMENTATION BILL

Sen. Rob Bradley, R-Fleming Island, who played a role in current medical marijuana laws, filed a bill Thursday (SB 406) to implement the new constitutional amendment.

Under Bradley's bill, the state could see another 20 marijuana operators -- nearly quadruple the seven current licensed "dispensing organizations" -- once the number of patients registered for the treatment reaches 500,000.



Christian Bax, director of the Florida Department of Health's Office of Compassionate Use, told lawmakers this week he expects that many patients to be registered in a state database by the end of the year.

Bradley's plan would also do away with a current requirement that doctors treat patients for at least 90 days before being allowed to order marijuana for them and would expand from 45 days to 90 days the amount of marijuana supplies patients can purchase. The legislation would also ban edible marijuana products "in a format designed to be attractive to children."

JUVENILE CIVIL CITATIONS PASSES SENATE COMMITTEE

The Senate Criminal Justice Committee passed SB 196 with a 5-2 vote. The bill would require civil citations to be given in lieu of arrests to juveniles who commit certain misdemeanors.

The Florida Sheriffs Association is in opposition to the bill in its current form as it does not give the officer enough discretion, they would like to amend the language to only require civil citations for those juveniles who are 14 years and younger.

The bill will be heard next in the Senate Appropriations on Criminal and Civil Justice Subcommittee.